

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3180

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ASMARA 0214

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PINS, ET, US

SUBJECT: ISSUES INVOLVED IN ETHIOPIAN MILITARY RESUPPLY

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 1850; B. ASMARA 203

1. DO NOT WISH APPEAR REPETITIOUS OR ATTEMPT PREJUDGE DIRECTION IN WHICH OVERALL USG INTEREST LIES WITH REGARD TO RESUPPLY ETH ARMY WITH AMMUNITION FOR ERITREAN OPERATIONS. I FEEL OBLIGED, NEVERTHELESS TO EMPHASIZE ONCE AGAIN THAT ANY DECISION TO RESUPPLY AMMUNITION IN MINIMUM AMOUNTS OR OTHERWISE (PARA 6(B)(C) REF A), AND WHATEVER THE CONDITIONS ATTACHED, WILL BE PERCEIVED NOT ONLY BY THE ERITREAN INSURGENTS BUT BY THE ERITREAN POPULACE AS A HOSTILE ACT.

2. AMERICANS CAN EXPECT, AT THAT POINT, TO BEGIN TO BE REGARDED AS ENEMIES AND TO HAVE HOSTILE ACTIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THEM. TO DATE, EVEN THOUGH AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT BEING USED BY ETH MILITARY AGAINST INSURGENTS, AND INCIDENTALLY, AGAINST CIVIL POPULACE, KNOWN BY EVERYONE IN ERITREA TO BE PROVIDED BY U.S. TO ETH GOVT, THIS REGARDED AS RESULT PAST POLICIES AND ACTIONS. ATTITUDE ON PART ERITREANS APPEARS TO BE THAT WHAT IS PAST IS PAST BUT THAT CURRENT AND FUTURE ACTIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED AS POSITIVE INDICATORS OF USG INTENT. RESUPPLY THEREFORE, WILL BE SEEN AS UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FOR EPMG HARD LINERS AGAINST ERITREA. A USG DECISION AT THIS POINT TO SUSPEND ANY RESUPPLY SO AS TO GIVE MEDIATION EFFORTS SOME CHANCE WOULD RETAIN GOOD WILL OF ERITREANS.

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AS YET, WE HAVE NOT EVEN DISCUSSED INSURGENCY WITH EPMG THAT IS

SO DEPENDENT ON US.

3. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT, IF THE DECISION IS TO RESUPPLY, IT DIFFICULT TO SEE THAT REMOVAL US COMMUNICATION FACILITIES HERE WILL HAVE ANY IMPACT AT ALL ON EPMG SINCE CONTINUANCE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL BE SEEN AS ASSURED. SIGNAL GIVEN BY THE RESUPPLY DECISION WILL BE SO STRONG THAT US WITHDRAWAL FROM ASMARA WILL PROBABLY BE IGNORED.

4. IF USG DECISION IS TO RESUPPLY NOW, EVEN ON TOKEN BASIS, THE EFFECT OF SUCH ACTION WILL BE TO EXPOSE REMAINING AMERICANS IN ERITREA TO HOSTILE ACTS BY AN AROUSED POPULATION AND AN ACTIVE AND CAPABLE GUERILLA FORCE THAT CAN ACT HERE AND, INDEED, IN ADDIS ABABA. IMPLICATIONS FOR TERRORIST ACTS BY LARGE NUMBER ERITREANS AMONG ETHIOPIAN STUDENT POPULATION IN US SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED.

5. IN SUM, IF WE ARE GOING TO RESUPPLY THE ETH MILITARY, AND IT CERTAINLY CONSISTENT WITH PAST US POLICY IN AFRICA TO SUPPORT TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LARGE STATES, I URGE IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THAT THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED ASMARA 176 BE INITIATED IMMEDIATELY AND ALL OUR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES BE CLOSED DOWN AND STAFFS WITHDRAWN. AS FOR RETENTION CONSULATE GENERAL, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AS POLITICAL REPORTING POST, FEASIBILITY WILL DEPEND ON DEGREE HOSTILITY, PROGRESS, IF ANY, IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND SIGNALS RECEIVED FROM ERITREANS AND EPMG. DECISION CAN BE MADE AS SITUATION DEVELOPS.
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